

Introduction to Alternatives A-E

As was stated in the Introduction to this report, NPS was directed by Congress to determine its possible role in the preservation and interpretation of Gullah/Geechee culture within the prescribed study area. In the pages to follow, four conceptual alternatives, as well as a fifth null or no action plan, are presented. Each of the action alternatives presents viable options for the interpretation of Gullah/Geechee culture. These alternatives are not mutually exclusive and could be adopted in part or *in toto*, if adequate funding is made available. Decisions as to selection of alternatives, management actions, and developments involving the resources of the NPS cannot be made without congressional authorization and further NPS planning. No action can be taken without congressional support and funding.

ALTERNATIVE A

Gullah/Geechee Coastal Heritage Centers

The Gullah/Geechee Special Resource Study is an unusual undertaking for the NPS because it is directed toward a living people and their evolving culture and because the cultural community boundaries cross state lines. Alternative A presents a groundbreaking departure from traditional NPS initiatives in response to this non-traditional Special Resource Study.

Three Gullah/Geechee coastal heritage centers, located in South Carolina and Georgia and convenient to the study area, would be established through partnerships with government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Ideally, these centers would be established and developed through cooperative use of existing public lands, requiring no funding for land acquisition or removal of lands from the Gullah/Geechee communities. Requested funding could thus be directed toward preservation, restoration, construction, and interpretation of Gullah/Geechee history and culture. Under this alternative, grants may also be available to assist in local preservation and revitalization projects.

The NPS would seek to recruit well-qualified individuals from the Gullah/Geechee community to assist in developing and presenting these interpretive programs. Legislation would be sought to facilitate recruitment and employment of Gullah/Geechee persons with roots in the surrounding communities. In addition, Gullah/Geechee businesses would be considered in the awarding of outsourcing contracts related to the coastal centers. Gullah/Geechee artisans and crafts people would have the opportunity to perform and sell their products directly to the public at these locations.

High school students and young adults from Gullah/Geechee communities would be encouraged to participate in such programs as Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), Student Conservation Association (SCA), and Americorps. Work experience with these organizations could provide special consideration to those seeking NPS employment.

Training and assistance could be made available to community groups seeking National Register status or historic markers for local historic sites. These groups could also be directed toward grants and other funding for any local projects that may not qualify for grants described within this alternative. Community education programs, seminars, and conferences could be jointly sponsored through resulting partnerships.

All three coastal heritage centers would present an interpretive overview of Gullah/Geechee history and culture, but each site may also emphasize a particular piece of the story that is relevant to the locale. Each center would thereby complement the others by featuring a different operational and interpretive emphasis. In combination these units would, therefore, offer diverse programs and services that provide comprehensive interpretive, educational, and resource preservation experiences relating to Gullah/Geechee people – their language, their culture, their history, as well as current issues facing Gullah/Geechee people and their communities.

Leaders in some Gullah/Geechee communities have expressed serious reservations with regard to increased visitation in their communities – “The last thing we need is more tourists!” (Goodwine, personal communication, 2002), while Gullah/Geechee communities, such as the Hog Hammock Community on Sapelo Island, Georgia; actively seek heritage tourism and its possible economic benefits. The location of heritage centers

adjacent to but not within Gullah/Geechee communities would appear to address both issues. Should economic growth and development occur as a result of the centers, entrepreneurial and employment opportunities would be close to but not intrusive upon historic sites. Visitors to the heritage centers could be directed into the communities that seek to increase heritage tourism. Coastal heritage centers would serve as gateways to Gullah/Geechee communities by offering interpretive material, descriptive maps, and contact information for historical and cultural sites within the study area. This gateway system would serve to provide educational/interpretive materials to visitors, while protecting fragile sites within the neighborhoods and communities from a mass influx of people. Visitors who desire more detailed information and/or persons seeking to determine their own ancestral ties to the Gullah/Geechee culture would be directed to make contact with resource people within the communities.

The three projected sites mentioned in this alternative are dispersed in strategic locations along the coast where host and neighboring communities could provide support for the centers. Thus, coastal heritage centers would not relegate Gullah/Geechee history and culture to a museum environment but rather would seek to interpret the history and evolving culture of the Gullah/Geechee people into the 21st Century. Centers would serve 21st Century Gullah/Geechee people by providing opportunities for them to research their roots and cultural heritage and creating a venue for educational programs dealing with issues facing their communities today. Residents of Gullah/Geechee communities would be encouraged to participate as partners in the interpretive process so that their voices might be heard in visitor programs.

The selection of plantations as Gullah/Geechee interpretive sites may at first summon the stereotypical image of enslaved Africans happily working on the plantation, and the master living in his fine plantation house. The plantation was, however, one of the first places where enslaved Africans demonstrated their innate intelligence, agricultural knowledge, multiple artisan skills, and musical/artistic ability. The plantation is the place where accurate interpretation can dispel the erroneous stereotypical images of *Gone with the Wind* and replace them with a vision of the harsh reality of slavery.

There are already a number of historic plantation houses open to the public, but most focus on the “big house” and the planter’s family. If enslaved Africans are mentioned at all, the interpretive material may focus on the story of one enslaved African or one enslaved family who was particularly loyal to the master. Interpretation at these sites generally omits that fact that as many as nine out of ten people who lived on the plantation were enslaved Africans. Although there has been some effort in recent years to include the slavery story, a great deal of work needs to be done before visitors at these sites will hear any semblance of the real story (Loewen 2000). Alternative A presents an opportunity to break new ground – to be the benchmark – the gold standard against which all other historic plantation sites could model and measure their interpretive programs.

For many years slavery was described as a benign institution under which enslaved people were well cared for and did not mind being controlled by their masters. The slave narratives, however, collected during the 1930’s – recollections of elders who had themselves been slaves in their younger days – presented actual memories of slavery times. Reading their words or hearing their voices removes slavery from the abstraction of a distant time and forces a connection to the challenges and plight of these enslaved human beings. Although the accuracy of these reminiscences has sometimes been questioned due to the methods used to collect the oral histories, the stories are, nonetheless, dramatic reminders of what many people choose to deny or forget (Blasingame 1975). In most cases, however, the slave narratives contradict the stereotypical smiling slave images that still remain in the minds of many and replace them with the story of captive human beings who long to control their own destinies.

Gullah/Geechee Special Resource Study Report

Draft for Public Review

91

Clearly, slavery and its inhumanity still haunt the collective historical memory of Americans.

The interpretation of the realities of life for all inhabitants of the study area may be met with skepticism and apprehension – even shame and embarrassment – from various segments of the population. Yet, organizations such as NPS, who are committed to the public's trust, have an obligation – indeed, a responsibility – to address such issues, even though they may be painful or uncomfortable to some visitors.

There is no simple solution to the interpretation of controversial issues. If the goal here is to tell the whole story, or at least as much of the story as can be accurately portrayed, then all sides must be represented through thoughtful interpretation of the past, warts and all. Only then will it be possible to understand the struggles and appreciate the myriad contributions of enslaved Africans to the fabric of America. Knowledge and understanding may, therefore, effect healing.

Alternative A, Site I

Three Sites Combined in Partnership to Form the Northern Anchor

The first coastal heritage center project involves partnerships between the United States Forest Service (USFS), South Carolina Parks, Recreation, and Tourism (SCPRT), and the National Park Service (NPS) for the combined use of Tibwin Plantation, Hampton Plantation State Historic Site, and Charles Pinckney National Historic Site. All three sites are located just off Hwy 17 in upper Charleston County. An interpretive center, serving these locations, would be constructed on Highway 17 at an as yet undetermined site.

Tibwin, Hampton and Snee Farm (Charles Pinckney NHS) each have an important story to tell. Each of the sites was owned by founding families of South Carolina. Each had numerous enslaved Africans who constructed the homes, cleared the land, planted the crops, and made other significant contributions to the infrastructure and wealth of the state and nation. Together these sites have a synergistic relationship that enhances interpretation of South Carolina from the earliest colonial beginnings, to the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Revolutionary War, the framing and signing of the Constitution, the growth of the new nation, the Civil War, and beyond. Intertwined with these events is the story of the Gullah/Geechee people, their language, their skills, and their historic ties to Africa, their unique New World culture, and their contributions to the American story. Gullah/Geechee people and their culture are an inseparable part of the fabric of what is often thought of as southern culture. Telling a more complete story at these three sites will underscore the contributions and significance of the Gullah/Geechee people to the development of state, regional, and national history and culture.

Hampton, Tibwin and Snee Farm provide many interpretive opportunities relating to early agricultural practices associated with indigo and rice production and processing, production of table crops, and fishing. Additional possibilities for education and interpretation include:

- Displays and demonstrations of traditional Gullah crafts, festivals, programs, concerts and other special events
- Educational programs through collaboration with partner organizations. Topics might include traditional arts and crafts, land tenure, heirs' property issues, historic preservation, economic development, grant writing, heritage tourism, and agricultural tourism.
- Production of sweetgrass and other raw materials for basket makers
- Heirloom agriculture and early agricultural methods
- Rice cultivation, both upland and tidal
- Traditional game hunting methods
- Traditional fishing, shrimping, crabbing, and oyster gathering
- Traditional cooking methods
- Water transportation
- Production and interpretation of medicinal herbs

Gullah/Geechee Special Resource Study Report

Draft for Public Review

93

- Visual arts
- Music and rhythms
- Construction and use of traditional percussion instruments
- Quilting and other textile arts

Alternative A, Site I-A

Tibwin Plantation



The house at Tibwin was stabilized and re-roofed in 2002.

Tibwin Plantation, dating from an early 18th Century land grant, is one of the oldest English agricultural sites on the South Carolina coast and was perhaps home to one of the earliest populations of enslaved African people. Because of Tibwin's location on salt water, only upland rice could be grown on the property. A rice mill, said to be designed by Jonathan Lucas, skilled English millwright who invented the water powered rice mill, was located there. According to local historians, this mill was removed to the Henry Ford Museum/Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan. The Tibwin lands could be used to illustrate 300 years of agricultural history by allowing interpretation of the earliest upland rice cultivation methods and the transition to Sea Island cotton and vegetables.

Tibwin is not well-known outside the McClellanville area, possibly because the property was privately owned until purchased by the USFS in the early 1990s. There is, however, a Gullah/Geechee community in the area with close ties to the Tibwin land, and many of these people have expressed their strong support of this project.

The house at Tibwin was constructed by enslaved African artisans. It was originally situated closer to the water, but was moved to its present site after an early hurricane. Hand hewn beams bear carved markings that indicate the placement of these timbers when the house was rebuilt on higher land. The original Tibwin house was of simple

Gullah/Geechee Special Resource Study Report

Draft for Public Review

95

story and a half construction, quite similar to the farm house at Charles Pinckney National Historic Site, but there have been additions and remodeling over the years.

The NPS Williamsport Preservation Center recently replaced the roof and stabilized the farm house. Basic renovation would be required before the building could be opened to the public. This restoration/renovation should be done in such a way that construction methods may be viewed and interpreted.

Outbuildings on the Tibwin site could be restored or rebuilt for use as an artisan center for demonstrating and teaching Gullah arts, crafts, and music. The Forest Service is working to locate suitable habitats on the property for production of sweetgrass and other raw materials for traditional basketry, which would be made available to Gullah/Geechee basketmakers.

In addition to remnants of the plantation past, Tibwin's lands feature a rich natural environment including tidal marshes, freshwater ponds, hardwood bottomlands, pine uplands, and wetlands that support marine life, birds, and other wildlife. Water access for fishing and shrimping could be made available to visitors. The USFS has established waterfowl refuge areas along the Intracoastal Waterway. Visitation at Tibwin would be restricted to areas of the property not included in this refuge.

Alternative A, Site I-B

Hampton Plantation State Historic Site



Hampton State Historic Site, a 322-acre park located on the South Santee River, was once a major rice plantation owned by Daniel Horry II. Enslaved African artisans constructed the original one and a half story farm house, which was quite similar to the houses at both Tibwin and Snee Farm. During the late 1750's enslaved workers renovated the farmhouse into the 13-room Georgian-styled mansion that exists today. The large Adam style portico is said to have been added in preparation for George Washington's visit to Hampton during his southern tour.

Daniel Horry II's second wife was Harriott Pinckney, daughter of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and sister to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. After Horry's death in 1785, Harriott and her mother stayed at Hampton and were there to greet George Washington when he stopped for breakfast on May 1, 1791. President Washington also stopped for breakfast at Snee Farm, which he referred to as the "Country Seat of Governor Pinckney," on May 10 of the same year.

The latest restoration of the house includes cutaway sections of walls and ceilings that illustrate the building's evolution from simple farmhouse to grand mansion. The house has been left unfurnished to highlight architectural and construction details. A historic kitchen building is located adjacent to the main house. Archaeological sites record the story of the rice and decline of the Low Country Rice Culture and the enslaved Africans whose labor made great wealth possible.

Both upland and tidal rice were grown at Hampton, and in 1850, over 250,000 pounds of rice were grown and processed with the labor of enslaved Africans. The majority of the tidal rice fields at Hampton were located on an island across Wambaw Creek from the main house. This island is now owned by the USFS, but as part of the coastal heritage center partnership, the Forest Service has offered to make this land available for rice culture interpretation. SCPRT has indicated a willingness to investigate providing visitor transportation to the island. Other agencies may partner in the restoration of some of the fields and dikes on the island.

Hampton, now a National Historic Landmark, was once home to the Horry, Pinckney, and Rutledge families, who were prominent planters, major slaveholders, and political leaders. Ledgers from Hampton Plantation are archived in the Library of Congress. These records show that newly freed slaves stayed at Hampton and were paid for their labors. Descendants of these slaves still live in neighboring communities, and some own property that was once part of Hampton. The park includes miles of nature trails and areas for picnics and family reunions.



*Chimney at Hampton was
once part of slave quarters*

Alternative A, Site I-C
Charles Pinckney National Historic Site



Charles Pinckney National Historic Site, a 28-acre park located on Long Point Road in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, is all that remains of Snee Farm, the smallest of the seven plantations owned by Charles Pinckney.

Pinckney was a four-term governor of South Carolina and a principal framer and signer of the United States Constitution. He married Mary Eleanor Laurens, daughter of Henry Laurens, who was a major importer and seller of enslaved Africans. Laurens was also named to attend the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, but ill health forced him to stay at home.

At the Constitutional Convention, Charles Pinckney argued successfully to protect slavery under the new Constitution. He believed that any attempt by convention delegates to halt the slave trade would be met with vehement resistance in the South, and could derail the entire Constitution process. Pinckney's insistence that slavery not be addressed protected his own lifestyle as well as that of his wealthy family and friends. As a result of his arguments, the labor-intense cultivation of rice continued at the expense of the enslaved African workers. Pinckney also proposed that the legislative branch consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives, with the House elected proportionate to the white population. Blacks would be counted as only 3/5ths of a person for the purpose of representation.

Charles Pinckney was cousin to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, whose mother Eliza Lucas Pinckney was instrumental in the establishment of indigo culture in the Carolina Colony.

Gullah/Geechee Special Resource Study Report

Draft for Public Review

99

Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, also a signer of the Constitution, was the first major slaveholder to speak out in favor of religion for slaves. In 1829 Pinckney addressed the Agricultural Society of South Carolina. His thoughts on providing religious instruction to enslaved Africans were not, however, altruistic in nature.

Nothing is better calculated to render man satisfied with his destiny in this world, than a conviction that its hardships and trials are as transitory as its honors and enjoyments; and that good conduct, founded on Christian principles, will ensure superior rewards in that which is future and eternal. A firm persuasion that is both our interest and duty to afford religious instruction to the blacks, induces me to dwell on this subject.

Pinckney believed that if “true religion” became part of their lives, slaves would become happy in their lot and be “more anxious to promote their owner’s welfare.”

Records at Charles Pinckney National Historic Site tell of the 46 slaves who worked the plantation in 1787. The Low Country farm house at Snee Farm was probably built *ca.* 1828 by William Matthews, who is thought to have also built the house at Tibwin. Early drawings show that the houses were of quite similar construction, though both have undergone additions and renovations that render these architectural similarities more difficult to see. Archeologists have identified and the location of the slave village and many of the outbuildings associated with the Snee Farm site. New wayside interpretive signs will be in place in the near future.

Charles Pinckney National Historic Site is located near the Gullah basket stands on Highway 17. Several surviving Gullah settlements are also in the vicinity. Descendants of Pinckney slaves worked on Snee Farm until the mid 20th Century (Gibbs 2002).

Alternative A, Site II
Museum and Research Center

Penn Center, Penn Historic District, St. Helena Island, South Carolina



Penn School is one of the most historically significant educational and cultural institutions in the United States. The school was established in 1862 by a group of churches and abolitionists from Pennsylvania who formed the Freedman Association to educate newly freed slaves. Laura M. Towne and Ellen Murray were founders and first teachers at Penn School. Charlotte Forten, who arrived a few months later, was the first black teacher at the school.

Classes were first held in a single room on Oak Plantation. Because freedmen understood that learning to read and write would help them achieve self sufficiency, the school grew rapidly and quickly outgrew the small classroom. The school was relocated in the Brick Baptist Church, where they stayed for about three years. At that time Penn School was able to purchase a 50-acre tract across from Brick Church. They purchased the land from freedman Hasting Gantt. A prefabricated building was then shipped from Pennsylvania, and became the first Penn School building.

Penn School not only taught literary skills but also taught vocational skills to newly freed slaves. For over 50 years Native Island Basketry was part of the industrial curriculum. The students were all male. The baskets produced at Penn School were of the older coarser style, with coils of rush rather than sweetgrass. Each basket produced at the school was marked with a trademark tag, which indicated its origin on the Penn School campus.

Although Penn School is no longer in operation, Penn Center, an African American cultural and community action foundation, operates the site. Scholars from around the world come to study Gullah Culture and African-American History there. Penn Center is located on St. Helena Island, a sub-tropical barrier island well known for its intact Gullah communities such as Frogmore. Like most Sea Islands, St. Helena is struggling with encroachment and land retention issues due to the population explosion on nearby resort islands. Penn Center has been involved in many community-based



Brick Baptist Church, St. Helena Island, SC

projects, such as bringing public water to the islands, helping farmers to establish cooperatives, and advocating better housing and health care for low-income people.

During the Civil Rights' Movement of the 1960s, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his staff met frequently at Penn Center. Dr. King saw the site as a place of retreat where he could formulate his thoughts and write his speeches for the struggle ahead. The Southern Christian Leadership Congress, founded by King, held annual meetings at Penn Center. Penn Center was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1974. Since then the NPS has enjoyed a continuous relationship with the organization and has funded numerous preservation projects on the campus.

In 1988 Penn Center hosted Joseph Saidu Momoh, then President of Sierra Leone. As a result of his visit, a delegation of Gullah/Geechee people from South Carolina and Georgia embarked on a journey to Africa as guests of the Sierra Leone government. Some three years later, Penn Center, in cooperation with the South Carolina Educational Television Network (SC-ETV), produced a documentary entitled, *Family across the Sea*. This video chronicles that reunion visit and explores the remarkable cultural connections between Low Country Gullah/Geechee people and the people of Sierra Leone, Africa.

The historic Butler Building, a stucco classroom building once used by the Penn School, would be restored/rehabilitated for adaptive re-use as a public museum. The museum would house interpretive exhibits specifically related to Gullah/Geechee history and culture and would be in addition to the existing York W. Bailey Museum, which interprets the history of Penn School.

Adjacent to this building, NPS would construct a new research building. This climate-controlled curatorial/archival building would be used to conserve, catalog, and store important artifacts and documents relating to the Gullah Culture. Penn Center documents, film, and other items currently stored in North Carolina could be returned and archived in this facility. Persons conducting research on the Gullah/Geechee people would have supervised access to these research materials. The new facilities would be operated and staffed by NPS employees.

Other facilities at Penn Center, such as Frissell Community House, could be made available for educational programs and performances. NPS, Penn Center, and community organizations could collaborate on academic meetings, workshops, cultural

performances, and other educational programs. Such community programs might include traditional arts and crafts, land tenure, heirs' property, historic preservation, economic development, grant writing, heritage tourism, and agricultural tourism.



Butler Building, Penn Center, site of possible museum/curatorial/archival building

Alternative A, Site III

**New Coastal Heritage Center
McIntosh County, Georgia**



Tabby ruins are all that remain of the old sugar works and rum refinery at the Thicket on Carnochan Creek near Darien, McIntosh County, Georgia

McIntosh County, Georgia, home of the world renowned McIntosh County Shouters, is a rural county located along the southern Georgia coast. The county, intersected by both U. S. Highway 17 and Interstate 95, is thus an important intercept point for travelers going both north and south along these routes. Highway 99, a spur of Highway 17 which has received designation as a National Scenic Byway, extends through the rural communities of Eulonia, Meridian, Carnegan and on into Glynn County. Historically, McIntosh County is known for rice and sugar production, commercial fishing, and the pulpwood industry. Many tabby structures exist throughout the county and surrounding area. Sapelo Island, well-known for its intact Gullah community, traditions, and festivals, is located in McIntosh County.

Darien, the county seat, was burned by federal troops in June 1863. Due to its location at the mouth of the Altamaha River system and proximity to the ocean and because of international demand for Georgia yellow pine timber, Darien was re-built and became a major timber port. The timber boom lasted from 1866 to World War I (Sullivan, 2000).

Among the 159 counties in Georgia, McIntosh is listed as 155th in economic ranking and is designated as economically distressed. A small county with a population of 11,000 people, McIntosh is about equally divided demographically between black and white

Gullah/Geechee Special Resource Study Report

Draft for Public Review

104

citizens. Only about 1/3 of the county's land is privately owned, with 1/3 in state and federal government ownership and the other 1/3 owned by the timber industry. Both local citizens and county officials have expressed considerable interest and support for this project.

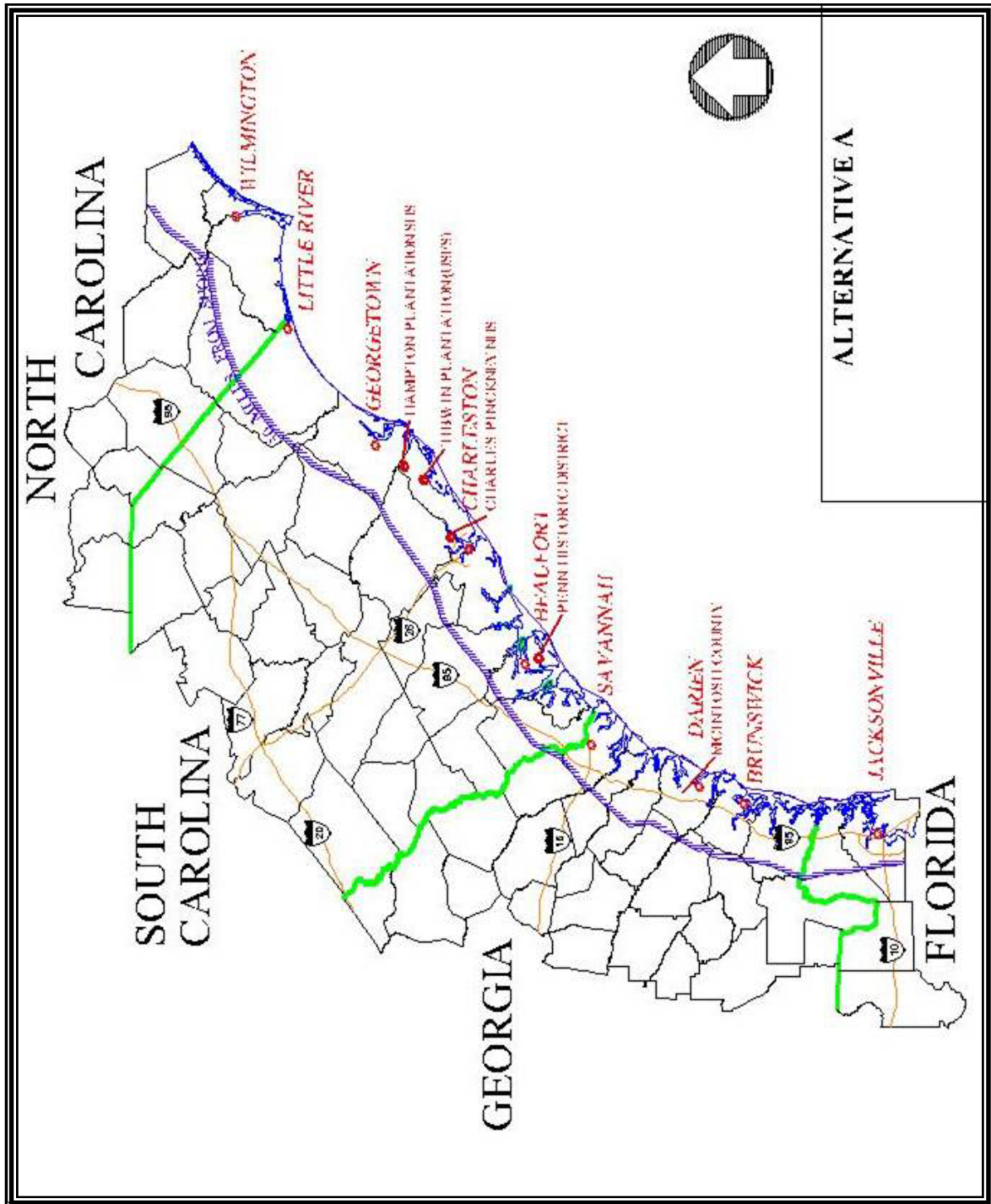
Many travelers on I-95 already stop at the outlet mall at Exit 49 near Darien, and many of visitors these may be interested in the learning opportunities at a Gullah/Geechee Coastal Heritage Center. Mall officials have expressed interest in a partnership with this project and would provide promotional space at no charge.

Under this alternative the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and/or the Trust for Public Land in partnership with the NPS, would provide an as yet undesignated property for a Gullah/Geechee Coastal Heritage Center to be constructed by NPS. This center could include museum exhibits (both visual and auditory), demonstrations of artisan skills and crafts, agricultural interpretation (sugar, rice, and Sea Island cotton), interpretation of the fishing and timber industries, appropriate space for musical and dramatic performances and community education programs. There would be retail outlet for Gullah crafts, books, and visual art. The center would also serve to direct interested visitors to Gullah/Geechee sites in the four-state area and/or to contacts within neighboring communities. Although plans for the center would clearly be dependent on the yet to be designated site, local consultation and participation would be sought in the design phase of this building and would be continued through its construction and eventual operation.

The Gullah/Geechee coastal heritage center in McIntosh County, Georgia, would thus become the southern anchor point or gateway. From this site visitors could be directed to Gullah/Geechee related sites in the immediate area as well as to those along the entire coast. Gullah/Geechee related sites in the area include, but are not limited to:

- Butler Island, Altamaha National Wildlife Refuge
- Harris Neck National Wildlife Preserve, Harris Neck, Georgia
- Sapelo Island Visitors Center, Meridian, Georgia
- Hog Hammock Community, Sapelo Island, Georgia
- Seabrook Village, Midway, Liberty County, Georgia
- Harrington School, St. Simons Island, Glynn County, Georgia
- Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation, Glynn County, Georgia

ALTERNATIVE A
Site Map



ALTERNATIVE B

Expanding the Gullah/Geechee Story

Existing NPS Units partnered with existing state and local sites for increased interpretation of the Gullah/Geechee Culture

Under this alternative, existing NPS units would collaborate with state and local park sites located in the Gullah/Geechee project area to administer a multi-partner interpretive and educational program. Cooperative agreements among agencies would identify and delegate administrative, operational, and program functions for each partner. It is also possible that private historic sites could be considered for inclusion in this program.

For example, the NPS and the State of South Carolina might enter into a cooperative agreement to create a partnership between Charles Pinckney National Historic Site and Hampton Plantation State Historic Site to collaborate on the development of interpretive educational programs on Gullah/Geechee culture in the Charleston area.

The primary goal of this alternative would be to increase interpretation of Gullah/Geechee history and culture in all appropriate sites within the study area. These sites might then complement each other by providing varied programs on Gullah/Geechee culture to visitors. NPS units best suited to this alternative are

- Charles Pinckney National Historic Site
- Fort Moultrie, a unit of Fort Sumter National Monument
- Fort Pulaski National Monument
- Cumberland Island National Seashore
- Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve (Kingsley Plantation)
- Fort Frederica National Monument

Each of these NPS units has an existing association with the Gullah/Geechee story that is not currently specifically addressed in the enabling legislation. The expansion of interpretive programs and other management functions to include aspects of the story of Gullah/Geechee history and culture would be viable at these parks.

This alternative may require specific enhancement of park legislation for each of the affected units. In developing interpretive programs, park managers would work closely with Gullah/Geechee organizations and individuals in local communities, as well as academicians and researchers, to ensure accuracy and appropriate respect for existing cultural practices and traditions.

Gullah/Geechee Special Resource Study Report

Draft for Public Review

107

NPS costs associated with potential expansion of interpretive programs at up to 5 existing park units, might include:

- Increase in staff to handle increased interpretive emphasis—possible staff collaboration/sharing with state and local sites.
- Exhibit expansion and upgrading.
- Modest facility expansion to accommodate new and enhanced interpretive programs.

Numerous opportunities exist within the coastal multi-state study area for partnership endeavors among existing NPS units, state park sites, as well as county and local parks. The following list includes some appropriate state and county sites in South Carolina, Georgia and Florida. This list is by no means inclusive; other appropriate sites are welcome as partners in this project.

South Carolina

- Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site (SCPRT)
- Caw Caw Interpretive Center (Charleston County PRC)
- Hampton State Historic Site (SCPRT)
- Edisto Island State Park (SCPRT)
- Hunting Island State Park (SCPRT)

Georgia

- Sapelo Island National Reserve
- Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation State Historic Site
- Butler Island Rice Plantation State Historic Site (Altamaha State Wildlife Management Area)

Florida

- Talbot Island State Park

Alternative B was frequently discussed at community meetings. Some people expressed fear that these existing units, which may have traditionally told a less than complete story, could not be trusted to tell the full story in an accurate manner. Most people, however, felt that it was worth the risk to move ahead with this process. Many expressed their belief that work on this alternative should begin immediately and without regard to the funding outcomes of the other alternatives.



*First African Baptist Church
Cumberland Island National Sea Shore*



Butler Island, Altamaha State Wildlife Management Area

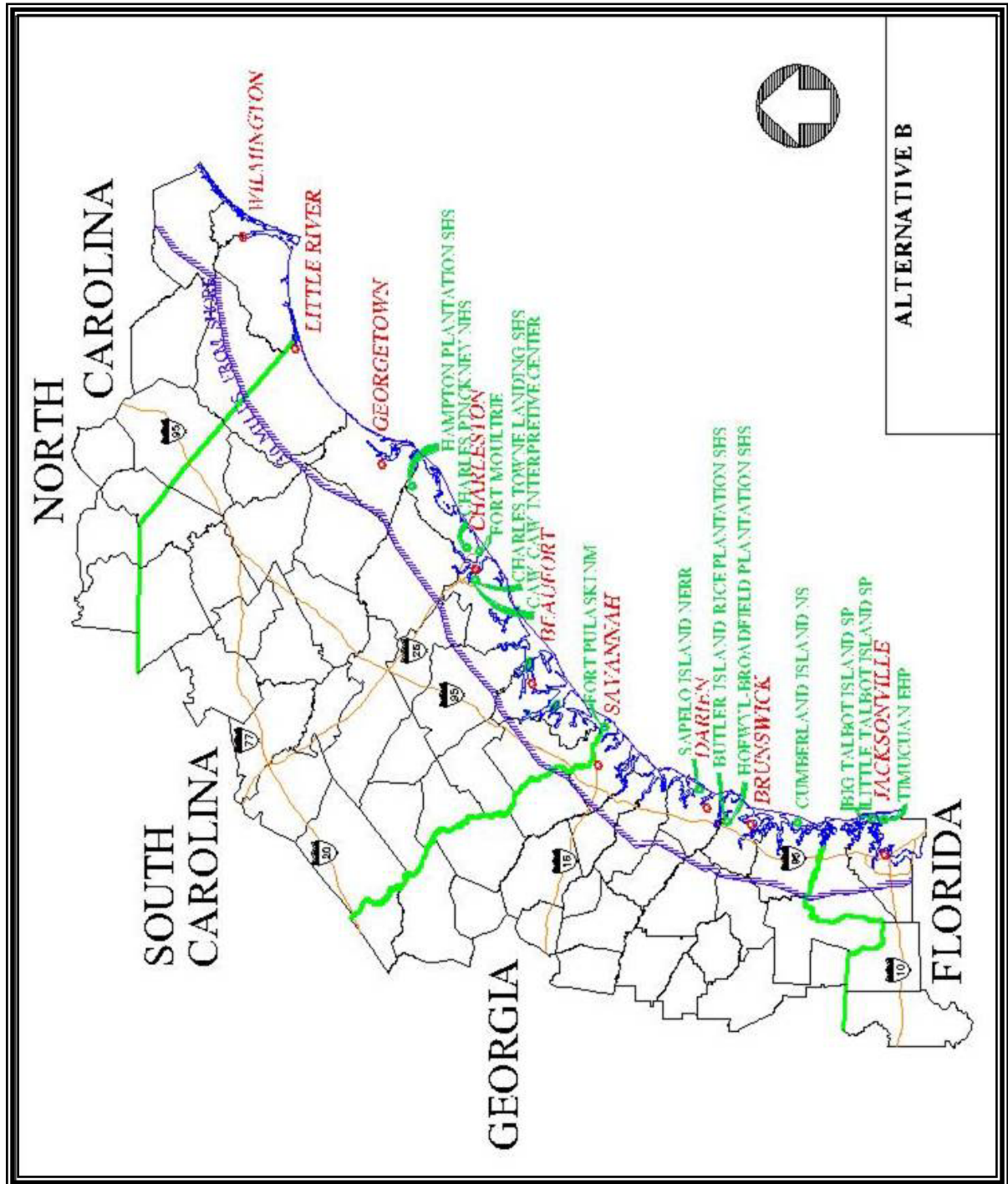


*Restored slave cabin, Kingsley Plantation
near Jacksonville, Florida*



*Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge
Harris Neck, McIntosh Co, GA*

ALTERNATIVE B
Site Map



ALTERNATIVE C

Gullah/Geechee National Heritage Area

Under this alternative, a National Heritage Area would be established to connect coastal resources, including cultural landscapes, archaeological sites, historic structures, and places of continuing ethnological importance that tell the story of Gullah/Geechee culture. This multi-state heritage partnership could interpret the entire Gullah/Geechee coastal area.

Communities across the country in partnership with landowners, local governments, state and federal agencies have developed heritage areas with the goal of creating more livable and economically vital regions. In an ideal situation, businesses such as restaurants, hotels, and gift shops, restaurants, and/or hotels may develop in response to tourist visitation and bring jobs and revenue to the surrounding communities.

Heritage areas are cost-effective because they can facilitate the leveraging of funds and resources for the conservation of natural, cultural, and historic values. More than 20% of all the National Historic Landmarks in the United States are located in such areas.

It is important to clarify that the Federal Government does not assume ownership of land, impose zoning or land use controls in heritage areas, or take responsibility for permanent funding – in other words, a heritage area does in itself preserve land. In most areas the authorizing legislation prohibits the management entity from acquiring property with federal funding appropriated for the heritage area. This guarantees that it will be the responsibility of the people living within a heritage area to ensure that the heritage area's resources are protected, interpreted and preserved.

The NPS recognizes national heritage areas as important partners for adjacent park units who are assisted by giving the community a voice in telling the larger story of a region, by building a common understanding and a vision for the future, and by encouraging local stewardship of key resources. Gateway communities in particular can benefit from heritage planning that reinvigorates local tourist offerings with real and authentic experiences.

A National Heritage Area (NHA) is defined by the NPS as a place, designated by Congress, where natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive cultural area arising from patterns of human activity and shaped by the geography of the region. These patterns of activity make national heritage areas representative of the national experience through the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved in them. Continued use of national heritage areas by people whose traditions helped to shape the landscapes enhances their significance. Not only is it important to note that the land base of the Gullah/Geechee coast encompasses an area that historically gave rise to the culture, but this same land base is also the focus of a continuing struggle for cultural survival and the people's tangible and non tangible cultural heritage.

A heritage area is both a place and a concept. Physically, heritage areas are regions with concentrations of important historic, cultural, natural, and recreational resources. These are places known for their unique culture and identity, as well as being good places to live and visit. As a concept, a heritage area serves to combine resource conservation and education with economic development, typically in the form of tourism. Usually there are

a number of sensitive sites within a heritage area that may be shielded from public visitation. However, there must be enough sites suitable for public view concentrated within a given area to create a sense of continuity for visitors along the way.

Heritage areas are inclusive of diverse peoples and their cultures because they encompass living landscapes and traditional uses of the land. A recent NPS survey shows that almost 45 million people across 17 states live within national heritage areas. Heritage areas are just one of a growing number of collaborative, community-based conservation strategies that have developed in recent years to identify, preserve, and interpret resources. By establishing a heritage area, communities work in partnership across jurisdictional boundaries to plan for their future, based on their shared heritage from the past.

National heritage areas have significance and value in their own right, as they encompass some of the most important cultural resources in the nation. Also of importance is the regional financial impact of heritage area designation. Gateway communities in particular can benefit from heritage planning that reinvigorates local tourist offerings with real and authentic experiences. The heritage area approach is one more link in a national network of parks and conservation areas between important natural resources and the people who live and work in related gateway communities.

The NPS has outlined four critical steps that need to be taken prior to congressional designation of a national heritage area. These steps are:

- Completion of a site inventory and suitability/feasibility study;
- Public involvement in the process of the suitability/feasibility study;
- Demonstration of widespread public support among all residents of the heritage area for the proposed National Heritage Area designation;
- Commitment to the proposal from appropriate partners, which may include governments, industry, and private non-profit organizations, in addition to the broad spectrum of local citizenry.

A site inventory should be of particular significance to the Gullah/Geechee population. Historic sites of importance to European settlers of the Low Country have been identified, mapped and studied in great detail. African-American sites have not been as well documented. An inventory would create a more complete picture of the cultural history and development of the Gullah/Geechee people throughout the study area. Despite much scholarly work on GG culture, physical sites have not been as well documented.

National Heritage Area Suitability and Feasibility Study

A suitability and feasibility study would determine whether or not an area contains resources of national importance, and should include a number of the components that are helpful for public review. Experience has also shown the importance of completing the suitability and feasibility study before a heritage area is designated. Only when an area has been studied and can satisfy these criteria, should it be designated as a national heritage area. The most helpful components of a suitability and feasibility study include analysis and documentation that show that the proposed area

1. Has an assemblage of natural, historic, or cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of national recognition, interpretation, conservation, and continuing use, and are best managed as such an assemblage through partnerships among public and private entities, and by combining diverse and sometimes noncontiguous resources and active communities;
2. Reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folk life that are a valuable part of the state and national stories;
3. Provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, cultural, historic, and/or scenic features and to increase public awareness of such resources;
4. Provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities;
5. The resources important to the identified theme or themes of the area retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation;
6. Principal organizations and individuals, drawn from a broad cross section of constituencies, are willing to develop partnerships to achieve stated goals and realize a vision consistent with establishment of a heritage area.
7. Residents, business interests, non-profit organizations, and governments within the proposed area are involved in the planning, have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants including the federal government, and have demonstrated support for designation of the area;
8. The proposed management entity and units of government supporting the designation are willing to commit to working in partnership to develop the heritage area;
9. The proposal is consistent with continued economic activity in the area;
10. The heritage area concept enjoys the approval and consent of government entities and citizens within the area;
11. A conceptual boundary map is supported by the public; and
12. The management entity proposed to plan and implement the project is described and supported by all local residents and partnering organizations.

The request for National Heritage Area designation must emanate as a grass-roots proposal. NPS involvement would likely be as start-up coordinator, and could include providing initial technical assistance for general planning, resource management, and interpretation. Although there is no lack of grass-roots organizations within the study area, but none have the structure and scope to be the start-up organization at this time.

Upon designation, an area must develop a management plan to serve as a road map for all stakeholders who support the vision for the area. The plan must be developed within the timeframe specified in the legislation (usually 3-5 years) and approved by the Secretary of the Interior. For designated areas, the National Park Service role is

- to work with the area on the management plan that will guide the heritage development of the region;
- to establish appropriate frameworks and procedures for ongoing advice and consultation from residents of Gullah/Geechee communities (as defined in NPS cultural resource management policies);
- to enter into a cooperative agreement that defines the NPS partnership role and to amend this agreement annually to allocate appropriated funds for the identified projects that will be undertaken to further the plan;
- to monitor the expenditure of funds;
- to ensure that the funds are properly matched and meet all other requirements;
- to review annual reports prepared by each management entity.

The NPS, along with other Federal land-managing agencies, can bring national recognition to the areas and provide other technical assistance on a case-by-case basis. Overall management of the heritage partnership would eventually be administered by one or more local entities representing each of the states in the study area. This multi-state entity would guide and oversee the goals and objectives of the heritage area. Although there would be no direct NPS ownership or management of resources in the heritage area, except existing NPS units, an agreement between the Secretary of the Interior and the management entity(s) would specify measures for administration of the heritage area. Although start-up funding may be available, a heritage area must become financially self-sufficient within a specified time frame, usually ten years.

Additional Highlights and Issues

- Funds to assist with NHA implementation would have to be appropriated by Congress;
- A National Heritage Area would require development of a management plan (subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior) that includes an inventory and assessment of resources, recommendations for resource protection and interpretation, and an implementation plan;
- New federal legislation would be required to authorize and provide appropriations for the National Heritage Area;
- State legislation would be needed to identify the management of the NHA;

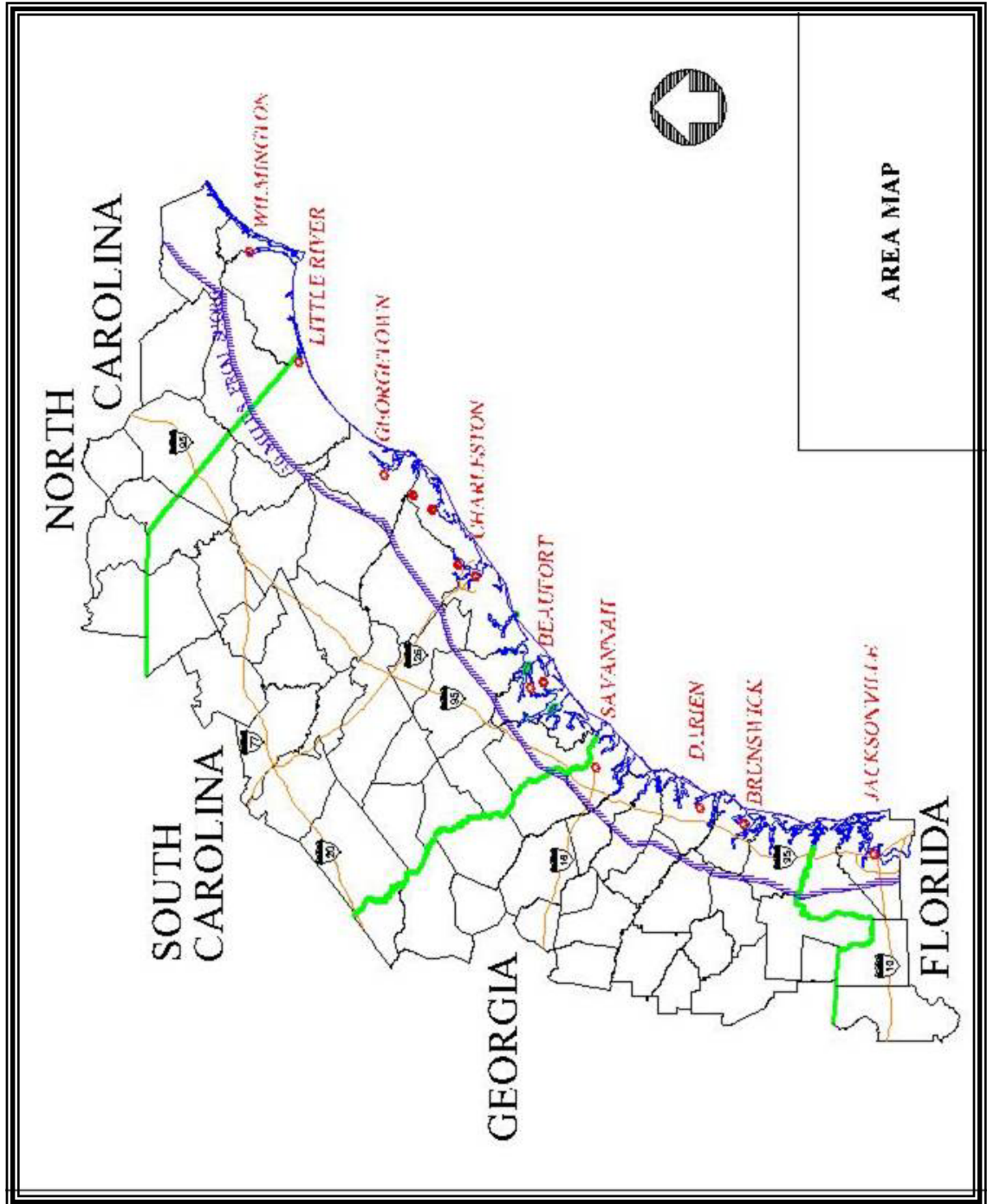
Gullah/Geechee Special Resource Study Report

Draft for Public Review

114

- Resources, sites, organizations (in addition to all places named in Alternatives A and B) must be identified. This list should include only those sites that are appropriate for public visitation. The sites and places of cultural expression listed below are only a partial listing. Suggestions for expanding this list are invited.
 - Historic churches and praise houses
 - Historically important waterfronts
 - Rosenwald Schools and other historic schoolhouses
 - Brookgreen Gardens, Georgetown County, South Carolina
 - Farmers' Alliance Hall, Sapelo Island, Georgia
 - Sweetgrass basket stands, Highway 17 near Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina
 - Boone Hall Plantation, Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina
 - Seabrook Village School Foundation, Midway, Georgia
 - Hobcaw Barony, Georgetown County, South Carolina
- Identification of sites and resources within the communities that are inappropriate for public visitation and taking steps to protect these sites from damage by over visitation.

ALTERNATIVE C
Area Map



ALTERNATIVE D

Alternative A + Alternative C

Alternative D, a combination of Alternatives A and C, came about as a result of comments made by participants in community forums held in 2002. Since both Alternative A and C are described in depth elsewhere in this document, it is not necessary to repeat that information here. In brief, Alternative D proposes a series of Gullah/Geechee Coastal Heritage Centers within the study area (see Alternative A). These coastal centers could serve as key stops or gateway sites within a Gullah/Geechee National Heritage Area (see Alternative C). Considerable time is required to establish a NHA; whereas Gullah/Geechee Coastal Heritage Centers could be up and running in a relatively short time. The centers could serve to promote the forthcoming NHA as well as the existing sites within Gullah/Geechee communities.

ALTERNATIVE E

No Action

This alternative is the no action plan or continuation of existing conditions. There is no NPS role under this alternative. The NPS would have no financial involvement. Several agencies within the area fund, operate, and/or maintain their resources in accordance with their abilities. At this time there is no unified resource protection program for the Gullah/Geechee study area, but interpretation of Gullah/Geechee culture in NPS sites would continue at the current level. Adoption of Alternative E does not imply that there is no national significance to Gullah/Geechee culture, but that no appropriate action can be identified under NPS mandates.

Partial Listing of Potential Partners for NPS Alternatives

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
African American heritage and preservation organizations in all 4 states
American Trails
Amtrak/NPS Trails to Rails
Association of Partners for Public Lands (APPL)
Atlantic Beach Historical Society
Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, College of Charleston
Bureau of Land Management
Center for Coastal and Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research, NOAA
City of Charleston Department of Cultural Affairs (Piccolo Spoleto and MOJA Arts Festivals)
Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC)
Charleston Museum
Chicora Foundation
Christ Church Parish Preservation Society, Inc.
Clemson Extension Service
Coastal Conservation League
Coastal Georgia Rural Development Center
County and Municipal Governments in South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina
Departments of education in the four states (South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina)
Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement (EASI)
Environmental Careers Organization
Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund
First African Baptist Church, Savannah, Georgia
Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina state park systems
Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation
Gullah Festival of South Carolina, Inc.
Gullah/Geechee Sea Island Coalition
Historic Charleston Foundation, McCleod Plantation
Hobcaw Barony (Belle B. Baruch Foundation)
International Museum of African American History
Individual Gullah/Geechee artisans
Lighthouse Museum, St. Simon's Island, GA
McClellanville Museum
National Park Service
National Trust for Historic Preservation
Neighborhood America
Original Sweetgrass Basket Makers Association
Penn Center
Private heritage tourism sites within the study area
Rice Museum, Georgetown, South Carolina
St. James Santee Parish Historical Society
St. Simons African American Heritage Coalition (SSAAHC)
St. Simons Island Land Trust
Seabrook Village Foundation, Midway, GA
Sea Grant Consortium in South Carolina and Georgia
Sewee to Santee Community Development Corporation
Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society (SICARS)

Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve
Smithsonian Institution, American Folklife Center
South Carolina African American Heritage Commission
South Carolina Artisan Center
South Carolina Bar Foundation
South Carolina Coastal Development Corporation, St. Helena Island, South Carolina
South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism (SCPRT)
South Carolina National Heritage Corridor
South Carolina State 1890 Extension Service
Southern Passages Heritage Coast
State historic sites within study area
State and local museums and libraries within the Gullah/Geechee study area
State governments of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida
State Historic Preservation Offices in NC, GA, FL, and SC
Tourism groups and Chambers of Commerce within the study area
Town of Edisto Beach, South Carolina
Town of Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina
University of Georgia Extension Service
US Department of Agriculture Liaison Office
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US Forest Service

Partial Listing of Colleges and Universities

Coastal Carolina University
Coastal Georgia Community College
Clemson University
College of Charleston
Edward Waters College (Historically Black Colleges and Universities)
Florida A & M University (Historically Black Colleges and Universities)
Florida State University
Savannah College of Art Design (SCAD)
Savannah State College (Historically Black Colleges and Universities)
South Carolina State University (Historically Black Colleges and Universities)
State University of West Georgia
The Citadel
University of Florida
University of Georgia
University of NC at Wilmington
University of South Carolina
University of South Carolina, Beaufort

Other organizations interested in joining in this partnership may contact the study team at

SERO_GullahGeechee_SRS_Team@nps.gov

See page 171 for individual addresses and telephone numbers.